The allotment of time for non-official business.

Dr A. G. Menon.—On a point of order, Sir. In Standing Order 6 (1) it is stated that the Diwan shall allot as many days as are, in his opinion, necessary for non-official business. When this point was brought before you the other day by Mr. Salem, you promised to consider it. Nothing has come out of it.

President.—Did I promise ?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Standing Order 6 (1) clearly lays down this.

President.—I remember Mr. Salem referred to that point.

Dr A. G. Menon.—During the last budget session.

President.—And then we had a lot of discussion. I thought I was able to satisfy Mr. Salem that my position was correct.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I sent some resolutions, and those resolutions were returned to me informing me that they would be taken up only in the legislative session. That is the point which I now bring to your notice.

President.—I shall consider that now.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—The point is this. The defect is we had a session in last April; the next session will come somewhere in September or October. During this interval we get one big session, the budget session. We have no chance of bringing any public business before the House between April and the next legislative session. So the public are deprived of the advantage of bringing in some non-official business during the interval. There, in Travancore, I think the rule is made a mandatory rule.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—And even in the legislative session much time is taken up by Government business, and thereby the non-official business is cut short, and, therefore, we are not allowed even sufficient time to move one resolution.

President.—This is the budget session. Which is the Standing Order you refer to ?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Standing Order No. 6 (1), and in it we have the words:

"The Diwan, after considering the state of business of the Council, shall, at the commencement of each session, allot as many days as are in his opinion compatible with the public interests for the business of the non-official Members in the Council, and may, from time to time, during the session, alter such allotment, and on these days such business shall have precedence."

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President.—So you say there is no distinction between the budget session and the legislative session?

Mr. A. B. Salem. No distinction. Sir, whether it is the budget session or the legislative session.

President.—Is it only descriptive there?

Mr. A. B. Salem.—And there is no Council in British India which does not allot some day for non official business at every session. I also refer you to Rule 48.

President.—I shall just explain the matter. During this budget session, we are having a 10 days' sitting, and on each day certain functions have to be performed according to the rules here.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—It is not necessary that we should have only 10 days.

President.—Now, I understand. The time will have to be lengthened. Last year, the budget session lasted for 10 days; this year also we have put 10 days. For the purpose of allowing one or two days for non-official business, the time should be lengthened.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Or the budget discussion should be finished in 8 days.

President.—For the budget we ought to allot 10 days. Under the Rules, the first day is for the presentation of the budget, the next two days for the general discussion, and the last 7 days for voting of demands for grants, so that, if this rule has to be given effect to, we have to lengthen the period of the budget session.

Dr. A. R. Menon.—Have you any information how they do it in Travancore?

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar.—They allot 20 days for the budget session.

President.—Do they bring in non-official business then?

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—They do allow, in the budget session, legislative business also.

President.—For how many days do they sit?

Mr. C. A. Ouseph.—They sit for nearly three weeks.

President.—During the budget session?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—We have no definite information as to the number of days they sit for. Some say 10 days, some 12 days, and some 3 weeks.

President.—We have our own rules to fix the number of days.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—In any case, it is certain they allot a few days during the budget session for non-official business also.

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Dr. A. G. Menon.—During the first budget session some time was allotted for non-official business. I was under that impression, and so I sent in certain resolutions.

President.—This point was never brought to my notice. I had no idea of that. I was under the impression that the 10 days are for carrying on the budget business, and no days can be cut short from that. But, if non-official business also has to be attended to, we must find time for that too.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Whether, during the first budget session, some time was not given to non-official business?

Mr. A. B. Salem.—At least during that session the requirements of that section was satisfied. The matter was brought to the notice of the Government even before the last budget session by means of a written communication that I addressed them. That was not heeded to by the Government. So I raised the point inside the House again and brought it prominently to the notice of the Government in public, and what is the result? We find the Government sticking still to their old method without any reformation being effected in the matter. That is a matter for serious complaint for this House. That is curtailing the right of the House. This was brought to the notice of the Government several times to rectify matters. There is no meaning in making rules and not adhering to them. I repeatedly brought it prominently to the notice of the Government, privately as well as publicly and inside the House, but without avail.

President.—We will look into the Travancore practice.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Why should we look into the Travancore practice? We have got our own rules.

President.—What is the cause of this excitement? Has anything sensational happened? We are to carry on the deliberations in as calm and harmonious a manner as is possible.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—I did not get excited.

President.—The thing is I thought the heavens were falling. The point must be urged, but we do not gain our point by any voiceful vehemence. Look at Mr. Salem. He hammers and hammers times without number, and he never loses his temper.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—In certain cases, even after that hammering, Government do not open their eyes; that is the difficulty, especially with the non officials.

President.—I do not think so. That is rather an unjust accusation. So far as I am concerned, when any point is brought to my notice, I give it serious consideration. If Mr. Salem had pointed out to me any reference with regard to the

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Travancore practice, I would have looked into that. I learned this for the first time now. I have read in the papers that they generally put in other business. But I do not know how they manage. I was under the impression that 10 days were absolutely necessary for the budget, and that the Members are entitled to say "you cannot cut short any of these ten days." The only go then is to find out extra days for non-official work.

Mr. C. A. Ouseph.—The budget should last only for 10 days, why not extend the time?

President.—The Secretary tells me that, in Travancore, they are having it for more days than 10. If we are to comply with the rules, we can meet to transact legislative business only in the next legislative session, and there is a considerable period between the last legislative meeting and the next legislative meeting. So some opportunity may be given for non-official business to be transacted.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—My complaint is not against the President. My complaint is against the Government.

President.—I do not take you to refer to me personally.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Certainly not.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—My complaint is that, though we have got all these in our rules, we are not given an opportunity to bring in non-official business during this session.

President.—I can understand your point.

Mr. T. K. Krishna Menon.—Will it be enough, if the Council sits for a greater number of days during the legislative sessions, instead of lengthening the budget session?

Dr. A. G. Menon.—We are not in a position to reply offhand.

President.—But Mr. Salem's point is to this effect. The interval between the last legislative meeting and the next legislative meeting is too long, and during that period the budget session comes, and if opportunity is not given for transacting non-official business then, the Members get opportunities for transacting business only after a distant interval. We probably prorogue in Meenam. Then the next legislative session comes in Vrischigam. So, more than six months have to elapse, and nothing could be done all the while. There may be important matters, for example, there may be adjournment motions. As it is, it is only when the Council is sitting that you can have adjournment motions. But, of course, you can have adjournment motions in the budget session also. But there may be questions of public interest and importance which might have to be discussed in Council. The interval is long. That is the point.

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